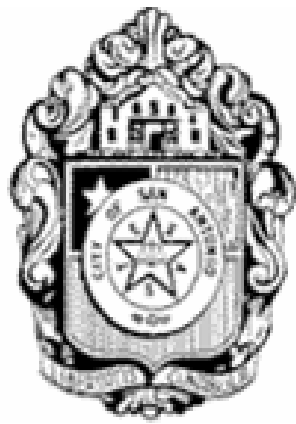


City of San Antonio/Bexar County
Citizens Commission on City-County
Service Integration



Recommendations Proposed by
Commission Subcommittees

March 25, 2004

Citizens Commission on City-County Service Integration

Glen Hartman
Commission Chair

Administrative Support Services Subcommittee

Norma Rodriguez, Chair
Steven A. Bennett
Bert Ceconi
EZ Mull
Gerry Rickhoff

Health and Human Services Subcommittee

Doug Harlan, Chair
Felix Castellano
Jeffrey A. Dean
Frances K. Mabry

Planning and Urban Development Subcommittee

Susan M. Wright, Chair
Mary Lee Buettner
Rebecca Q. Cedillo
Sheila McNeil

Public Safety Subcommittee

Jeffrey A. Dean, Chair
Bert Ceconi
Catherine Torres-Stahl

Recreation and Leisure Services Subcommittee

Doug McMurry, Chair
David Palmer
David Peterson

Utilities, Public Works and Environmental Services Subcommittee

Rebecca Q. Cedillo, Chair
Carole Abitz
Ronald E. Rocha
Glenn S. Snider
Harold Tillman

Community Education Subcommittee

Doug Harlan, Chair
David Palmer
Susan M. Wright

Commission Staff

Dr. Tom Brereton
Commission Consultant

Bexar County Office of the County Judge

Seth Mitchell
Chief of Staff

Cindy Segovia
Senior Analyst

City of San Antonio Department of External Relations

Jim Campbell
Director

Ray Baray
Intergovernmental Relations Manager

Alejandra Lopez
Special Projects Coordinator

Contents

BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION	1
HEALTH AND HUMAN RESOURCES.....	3
HEALTH: PREVENTION AND TREATMENT	3
SOCIAL SERVICES	5
HUMAN RESOURCES	6
PUBLIC SAFETY	7
POLICE TRAINING	7
JURY POOL	9
ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT SERVICES.....	10
SATELLITE SERVICE OFFICES.....	10
CITIZEN SERVICE ACCESS: THE 311 SYSTEM	12
BEXAR COUNTY/SAN ANTONIO HISTORY CENTER	13
RECREATION AND LEISURE SERVICES	15
PARKS.....	15
LIBRARY	17
UTILITIES, PUBLIC WORKS AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES.....	18
GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS.....	18
HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE COLLECTION.....	21
ILLEGAL DUMPING.....	22
STREETS AND ROADS MAINTENANCE	23
TRAFFIC SIGNALS OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE.....	24
FLOOD CONTROL	25
PLANNING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT	26
DEVELOPMENT PROCESS.....	26
HOUSING AUTHORITIES	28
THE FUTURE OF CITY-COUNTY SERVICE INTEGRATION	29

BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

The Citizens Commission on City-County Service Integration was appointed in October 2003 by the San Antonio City Council and Bexar County Commissioners Court. It consists of 23 members, including 11 appointed by City Council, 11 appointed by Commissioners Court, and the Chair appointed jointly by Mayor Ed Garza and County Judge Nelson Wolff.

The Commission was created against the background of the failure of efforts in the 1990s to achieve formal structural consolidation of city and county governments and the limited but increasing success of efforts since 2001 to integrate city and county services through interlocal contracts and agreements. Its objective is to achieve more substantial benefits in the efficiency, effectiveness, equity and accountability of both governments while continuing to maintain their separate identity as two distinct governments with overlapping jurisdictions. It is also to make local government more seamless and transparent to the citizens who are the taxpayers of both governments.

The Commission was charged to:

- (1) Review best practices and models of service integration from other communities, including the role of special districts and authorities alongside city and county governments;
- (2) Develop and implement community education programs on the desirability of functional consolidation of city and county services;
- (3) Recommend a plan to transfer and consolidate functions and services between the city and county governments and other special districts that is equitable to both city and county taxpayers; and
- (4) Develop a draft of any state legislation that may be needed to implement the Commission's recommendations.

The Commission has conducted extensive research into the existing structure and functioning of our city and county governments, including many hours of detailed briefings and discussions with a large number of staff from the city, the county, other local governments, and related stakeholders. It has studied the historical development of city and county governments in Texas and considered academic research on "best practices" in the assignment of functions among local governments in a metropolitan area.

In order to examine the full universe of city and county services, the Commission divided into six subcommittees to study the following functional areas:

- Public Safety – including law enforcement, fire, EMS, emergency operations and related services;
- Administrative Support Services – including personnel, purchasing, information services, records management and related services;
- Health and Human Resources – including the Metropolitan Health District, University Health System, City Community Initiatives and related services;

- Utilities, Public Works and Environmental Services – including stormwater, drainage and flood control, solid waste collection and disposal, air quality, water supply, sewage treatment, streets and highways, and related services;
- Planning and Urban Development – including planning, housing, CDBG administration, economic development and related services; and
- Recreation and Leisure Services – including parks and recreation, libraries, tourism, arts and cultural programs, entertainment and related services.

The Commission also created a Community Education Subcommittee to organize “town hall” meetings on possible Commission recommendations, develop community education programs through the mass media, and conduct related information and outreach programs.

The governing bodies that appointed the Commission asked it to submit its initial recommendations in time for them to be considered in developing the City’s and County’s budgets for FY 2005. This means by the beginning of May 2004. The Commission has been severely tested by the ambitiousness of this schedule.

This document does ***not*** contain any actual recommendations by the Commission. Instead it is the Commission’s first step *toward formulating* the recommendations that it will make to its appointing bodies in May. It contains the *proposed* recommendations that the Commission’s six functional area subcommittees have recommended for the Commission’s consideration at the end of their research. The Commission is publishing them in this form for public review and comment, and to receive feedback on them from the community in a series of public hearings that are scheduled at the end of March and beginning of April. Only after receiving this community feedback will the Commission itself begin to formulate its actual recommendations to Council and Commissioners Court.

As far as practical, these proposed recommendations have been extracted from the subcommittees’ reports to the Commission in their “raw” form, edited only for clarity and consistency of style and format. Each subcommittee was asked to follow a common outline including (1) a description of the existing service structure, (2) a clear and succinct statement of the subcommittee’s proposed recommendation, (3) the rationale for the recommendation and benefits expected to be achieved, (4) any “special considerations” that affect the recommendation, (5) whether new legislation appears to be required to implement the recommendation, and (6) to the extent possible, a timeline for implementation.

This document also does not contain any outline of the legislation that may be required to implement these recommendations. The Commission and its subcommittees have simply not had time to consider these issues, or to obtain the advice of the City Attorney and the District Attorney’s Civil Section on this matter. The Commission expects to address this part of its mandate following the presentation of its recommendations in May, and on a schedule that will allow these items to be considered as Council and Commissioners Court develop their respective 2005 state legislative programs.

HEALTH AND HUMAN RESOURCES

The Health and Human Resources Subcommittee was charged with studying the services provided by the San Antonio Metropolitan Health District, the Bexar County Hospital District, the Bexar County Medical Examiner's Office, the Bexar County Forensics Lab, and both governments' departments which provide social services (the San Antonio Department of Community Initiatives and the Bexar County Department of Housing and Human Services). After work began, the subcommittee was also charged with studying both governments' Department of Human Resources.

HEALTH: PREVENTION AND TREATMENT

Existing Service Structure

The Metropolitan Health District is a statutorily-created entity whose primary mission is disease prevention. The University Hospital System is also a statutorily-created entity (by separate statute) whose primary mission is providing patient care to citizens in need of health care and participating in the teaching and training of new health care professionals. There is very little overlap of services provided by the two entities.

The Bexar County Medical Examiner's Office investigates the deaths of Bexar County citizens who die suddenly, violently, or unexpectedly, in order to determine the cause and manner of death. Often, the office performs autopsies and makes toxicological studies. The Bexar County Crime Lab provides forensic support to county law enforcement and by contract to the City of San Antonio to some law enforcement agencies elsewhere in Texas and even outside of Texas on a fee-for-service basis.

Recommendation

The City and County should consider putting the Metropolitan Health District, the University Hospital System, the Medical Examiner, and the Forensics Lab under the governance of a single city-county health authority, governed by an independent board akin to the current University Hospital System board.

Rationale

The benefit of this functional consolidation would be increased communication and cooperation among these agencies, with the expectation that physical proximity and closer communication might enable each to achieve a higher degree of effectiveness in carrying out its specific responsibilities for the citizens of Bexar County. There might be some efficiencies and savings in the single administration of all these functions, but the primary goal we hope could be attained by a consolidation of administration is an enhanced effectiveness for all by having regular communication with and ready access to the expertise of the others.

Special Considerations

Marketing of services by the Bexar County Crime Lab to more outside agencies than it presently serves might enable it to expand the services it provides. The subcommittee also believes there

is potential for expanding the constituents of the Medical Examiner's Office and for increasing its revenue thereby.

Legislation

Legislation would be required for the integration of the University Hospital System and the San Antonio Metropolitan Health District. The inclusion of the Bexar County Medical Examiner's Office and the Bexar County Crime Lab as part of a new health- and science-oriented district would require only the approval of the city and county.

SOCIAL SERVICES

Existing Service Structure

The City's Department of Community Initiatives and the County's Department of Housing and Human Services, both directly and indirectly through delegate agencies, provide various kinds of assistance to citizens in economic need, ranging from child care and youth services to programs aiding senior citizens. The services also entail training, education, and direct-assistance programs to improve nutrition, resolve temporary housing problems, and help in emergency situations with utility bills and mortgage payments. Many of the services provided are funded, at least in part, by state or federal agencies.

Under current circumstances, a citizen in need of help must contact (and, in some instances, go to) at least two separate places to apply for assistance, and, depending upon the need, there are two places to go for *each* kind of assistance needed B e.g., utility assistance, rent assistance, mortgage payment assistance, etc.

Recommendation

The city's Department of Community Initiatives and the county's Department of Housing and Human Services should be administratively consolidated in some form. Pending formal structural reorganization, their services should be co-located at a single location (along with appropriate state agencies) where citizens should be able to apply for assistance, and one application form should cover all kinds of assistance needed.

Special Considerations

The integrated agency in charge of human services should emphasize marketing its services to the constituents it serves, with the aim of better informing citizens of what services are available in time of need and where to go to obtain them. Simplifying application procedures and expediting delivery of the services should be principal goals of the new agency.

Legislation

Co-location of parallel city and county agencies can be accomplished by interlocal agreement. However, structural integration may require various amendments to state and federal legislation and/or regulations and approval by the state and federal agencies that fund these services.

Implementation

- Staff exploration of alternatives for co-location of services and development of an implementation plan should be an element of the FY 2005 work program of the Plan for City-County Cooperation.
- Implementation of a social services "One-Stop Center" should be targeted for FY 2006.
- Structural consolidation of administration may have to proceed incrementally, as approvals are obtained for particular services.

HUMAN RESOURCES

Existing Service Structure

The Human Resource Departments of the City and County governments necessarily perform similar functions of advertising personnel vacancies, processing employment applications, handling personnel matters, and managing employee records and benefit programs, including health benefits.

Recommendation

The City's and County's Departments of Human Resources should be administratively consolidated in some form.

Rationale

Administrative consolidation should produce improve efficiency in advertising vacancies, processing and screening applicants, maintaining records, and, perhaps, in securing higher quality employee benefits, such as health care. It would also serve applicants more effectively and efficiently and improve both governments' ability to pair them with appropriate open positions.

Legislation

None required.

Implementation

Alternatives for consolidation of these services should be explored in the 2005 work program of the Plan for City-County Cooperation. An appropriate interlocal agreement should be concluded by FY 2006.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Areas Studied

The Public Safety Subcommittee was charged with examining police, fire, EMS, Emergency Operations, and other public safety-related services. After its initial survey of these functions, the subcommittee focused on two areas that seem to have the greatest potential for integration: police training and a consolidated jury process. The subcommittee also studied the SAPD's and Sheriff's crime victim advocacy programs and the development of a joint Emergency Operations Plan but determined that these issues require further study.

POLICE TRAINING

Existing Service Structure

There are four unique service structures for police training in the region: the San Antonio Police Academy, the Bexar County Sheriff's Academy, the Alamo Area Council of Governments Regional Law Enforcement Academy, and the San Antonio College Law Enforcement Academy. All of them provide the basic training required for state certification as a peace officer. The SAPD and the Sheriff's academy provide additional training and instruction that is specially tailored to their departments' operations and procedures. The SAPD Training Academy is located on an ample site and was designed to allow for expansion to serve as a regional training academy.

Recommendation

The Sheriff's training academy and the AACOG training academy should be integrated into the City's training academy creating a regional training facility. This should be overseen by a "Committee of Five" consisting of the San Antonio Chief of Police, the Bexar County Sheriff, AACOG's Criminal Justice Director, a representative of the surrounding 11 counties, and a representative of the suburban and other cities in the region.

Special Considerations

Implementation of this recommendation would have to conform to the requirements of the City's union contract with the San Antonio Police Officers Association.

Special consideration should be giving to the fair share cost of operating such a facility, i.e. the County or a suburban city would pay a fair price for employee training to be determined by the Committee of Five. Additional classrooms and administrative offices will be needed to accommodate the transfer of cadets from the existing AACOG and County training facilities.

Another special consideration is to determine how cadets are to be paid and/or to pay for training. The City and County provide cadets a full salary during training and pay all of the costs associated with training. AACOG and San Antonio College require cadets/students to pay for their own training. The cost for basic TCLEOSE certification at AACOG is \$1,200 for 957 hours of training.

Legislation

None required. However, an interlocal agreement involving the City, the County Sheriff and AACOG would be a unique pioneering undertaking.

In addition, the subcommittee recommends exploring the possibility of developing legislation that would provide state funding currently utilized to fund training programs at San Antonio College to offset the cost of operating a regional training facility.

Implementation

Initial explorations of the feasibility of this recommendation should be undertaken within the context of the FY 2005 work program of the Plan for City-County Cooperation. An actual agreement probably cannot be implemented before FY 2007 at the earliest. In addition, capital improvements would be required to implement this project.

JURY POOL

Existing Service Structure

Bexar County has a central jury pool for all of the state and county courts that are part of the county government: 24 district courts, 12 county courts, 2 probate courts, 5 justice of the peace courts, 1 magistrate court and 1 criminal impact court. The City duplicates the County's entire process of selecting a jury pool for the occasional jury trial in Municipal Court, which occurs on average once a week. In addition to this useless duplication of administrative effort, individual citizens may thus be called to jury service for both governmental entities within a burdensomely short span of time.

Recommendation

Jurors in Municipal Court should be selected from the citizens responding to the County's call to jury service.

Legislation

None required. However, an amendment to state law is desirable to count recent jury service in Municipal Court as an exemption from a repeated call.

Implementation

Negotiation and adoption of the necessary interlocal agreement should be concluded before the beginning of FY 2005.

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT SERVICES

Areas Studied

The Administrative Support Services Subcommittee was charged to review the City's and County's internal support service functions: personnel, purchasing, information services, records management, etc. It considered in detail the operation of the two Purchasing Departments and the two governments' various efforts to decentralize service delivery and to make service access easier for the average citizen. It also consulted with the Blue Ribbon Commission on a Bexar County/San Antonio History Center to consider the requirements of that particular form of service integration.

SATELLITE SERVICE OFFICES

Existing Service Structure

The City has a network of Community Link Service Centers where citizens can conduct a wide variety of transactions with the city government. The personnel at these centers are extensively cross-trained to make city government as transparent and user-friendly as possible. Meanwhile the County has a series of scattered decentralized offices to facilitate individual departments' respective services to county citizens.

The San Antonio Water System and City Public Service also have decentralized offices for citizen service. Some of these are co-located.

During development of the 2003 County bond issue, consideration was given to developing a series of general-purpose satellite offices to consolidate all of the County's citizen service offices at a single location in each Commissioner's precinct. However, sufficient funding was not available to place such a proposition on the ballot.

The FY 2004 work program of the Plan for City-County Cooperation includes exploring the potential for developing a combined city-county service center in the high growth area around Bandera Road and Loop 1604.

Recommendation

The city's Community Link Service Centers and the county's scattered satellite offices should be combined into a network of service centers where citizens can conduct all kinds of routine business with the city and county governments at a single location. These consolidated service centers should also include CPS, SAWS, and Bexar Metropolitan Water District.

Special Considerations

Pending development of new physical facilities, County services should be integrated with the Community Link Service Centers as much as possible through co-location in leased space, cross-training of employees, and use of appropriate technology to ease access to service delivery.

Legislation

None required.

Implementation

Exploration of expanding the Community Link Service Centers to include County services should be an element of the 2005 work program of the Plan for City-County Cooperation. An appropriate interlocal agreement should be negotiated and implemented by FY 2006.

Bexar County should complete a financial feasibility study of the recommended consolidated service centers in the course of planning for the next county general obligation bond issue.

CITIZEN SERVICE ACCESS: THE 311 SYSTEM

Existing Service Structure

The City operates a “24/7” 311 program which serves as a general information resource and which tracks problem calls for its citizens. The County has no formal integrated program equivalent to this. A significant proportion of calls to the City’s 311 service line involve county services.

Recommendation

The 311 program should be expanded to include all County services.

Special Considerations

Implementation of this recommendation would do more to make city and county government seamless and transparent to the average citizen than any other recommendation in this report.

The FY 2004 work program of the Plan for City-County Cooperation already includes exploration of the many significant technical issues to be resolved in implementing this recommendation. High among these is upgrading the County’s own technology for tracking citizen service requests.

Legislation

None required.

Implementation

The required feasibility studies are already programmed in the FY 2004 work program of the Plan for City-County Cooperation.

BEXAR COUNTY/SAN ANTONIO HISTORY CENTER

Existing Service Structure

The City and the County have both supported an initiative to create a Bexar County/San Antonio History Center through the creation of the Blue Ribbon Commission to conduct feasibility studies and develop a plan for implementation. The Commission has recommended a two-part “center” including an archival research facility and a “gateway” museum of local history which would orient visitors to the rich historical resources that are available at other locations. In November 2003, city and county voters both approved parallel bond issues that are the first steps toward implementation.

Recommendation

The City and the County should complete the necessary feasibility studies and enter into a partnership for development and management of the History Center.

Special Considerations

The City and County governments should look closely at the former Hertzberg Museum building and the adjoining property owned by SAWS for the establishment of the Center. The Blue Ribbon Commission’s initial recommendation was to use the Hertzberg as the location for the museum component and to locate the archival center at some other site. However, the Hertzberg may actually be more suitable to the archival function, and it is subject to a deed restriction that requires it to be used as a public library. Redevelopment of part of the adjacent SAWS property as the museum component could make this one of the premier tourist destinations in San Antonio.

In addition to some kind of joint governing board, partnerships with allied historical organizations and development of support groups should be considered.

The History Center will also need a secure, long term, dedicated funding source, which has yet to be determined.

The importance of the San Antonio Public Library’s Texana/Genealogy collection to the mission of the History Center and the deed restriction on the Hertzberg building both suggest some kind of relationship to the SAPL or a county library district.

Legislation

New legislation will likely be needed to give the City and County the authority to create a board of directors, funding authorization, and the authorization to collect archival records from both the City and the County.

Implementation

Studies of the “program” content for both components of the Center have been funded by previous City and County appropriations and should be completed under the direction of the Blue Ribbon Commission by the end of calendar 2004.

Required legislation should be included in the City's and County's 2005 legislative agendas if possible.

Physical development of facilities should be a proposition in the next round of city and county general obligation bonds.

RECREATION AND LEISURE SERVICES

Area Studied

This subcommittee studied parks and recreation, libraries, tourism, arts and cultural programs and related services. It found the most significant needs and opportunities for service integration in parks and recreation. Alongside structural issues, the subcommittee believes the most significant problem regarding parks and libraries is not lack of integration but rather a lack of adequate funding.

PARKS

Existing Service Structure

The City of San Antonio operates and maintains by far the largest park system in Bexar County. In addition to traditional city parks, the City has been acquiring and preserving as open space lands over the Edwards Aquifer Recharge Zone under the Proposition 3 sales tax initiative – much of which is outside the city limits.

At the same time, Bexar County operates a network of county parks which are principally facilities for family and group events. All but one of these parks is inside the city limits, and the exception is at the city boundary.

In addition, the San Antonio River Authority operates the parks at Braunig and Calaveras Lakes under long-term contract to City Public Service, which owns the lakes as cooling facilities for its electric generating plants.

Security at city parks is provided through the City's specially trained Parks Police, which is a separate force from the San Antonio Police Department. Security at the other parks is provided as necessary (and as available) by the Sheriff's Department and county constables.

City Council and Commissioners Court separately determine the rules and policies governing such things as pets, deposits, alcohol consumption and hours of operation.

The county has contracted with the city to manage a consolidated reservations system for facilities at all city and county parks. SARA's parks are not part of this system.

In the face of this fragmented structure of service delivery, city, county and SARA parks are all totally indistinguishable in the average citizen's mind.

Recommendations

1. The City's park police should provide security at all the parks in Bexar County, including those maintained by the San Antonio River Authority.
2. Similarly, Council and Commissioners Court should adopt uniform rules and practices governing parks throughout Bexar County.
3. SARA's parks should be included in the consolidated central reservations system.

4. The San Antonio Parks Foundation should assist with grant funding for County parks as well as City parks. The Foundation, the city Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, and the newly revitalized Friends of the Parks should play a more active role in the City budget process to secure more funding for parks.

Legislation

None required.

Implementation

Exploration of the required interlocal agreements should be an element of the FY 2005 work program of the Plan for City-County Cooperation. Consolidation of SARA park reservations should be accomplished by the beginning of FY 2005.

LIBRARY

Existing Service Structure

The City of San Antonio's Public Library system is freely available to everyone in Bexar County through a contract between the city and the county. The County pays for outside-city users by contributing a proportion of the city's library budget that is equal to the library's book circulation to residents outside the city. As with all county taxes, three-quarters of the revenue is paid by taxpayers inside the City of San Antonio.

In addition, several of the suburban municipalities (Converse, Universal City and Leon Valley) maintain their own local municipal public libraries at their own taxpayers' expense.

The San Antonio Public Library also provides technical support services to all of the public libraries in a large region of South Texas through the state-funded Alamo Area Library System.

The underfunding of the city's library system has been a matter of public concern and editorial comment for many years. Recently proposals have been aired to create a countywide library district in an effort to expand the tax base supporting the library system and to correct the inequity of double-taxing city residents to subsidize the use of the library by suburban residents.

Recommendation

The subcommittee is not prepared at this point to recommend the creation of a county library district. However, the subcommittee does recommend integrating the purchasing of library books by the City and suburban municipal libraries in order to achieve efficiency through economies of scale. Likewise, we would encourage city officials, the Library Foundation and the Friends of the Library to continue to seek grant money and aggressively promote corporate sponsorships.

Special Considerations

In the absence of adequate funding for the San Antonio Public Library, the creation of a Bexar County Library District should be considered. However, the existing legislation that authorizes library districts is designed for small rural libraries and is inadequate for this purpose. A district that is financed by a property tax would require legislation in the form of a local-interest amendment to the state constitution as well as ratification by the voters. Implementation issues would include the structure of a governing board that is effectively accountable to the voters, the transfer of the properties and staff of the SAPL to the new district, the disposition of the city's existing and authorized library debt, and the relationship between the district and the existing suburban municipal libraries.

Legislation

None required.

UTILITIES, PUBLIC WORKS AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

Areas Studied

This subcommittee was charged with reviewing water supply and sewage treatment, stormwater, drainage and flood control, streets and highways, solid waste collection and disposal, and other infrastructure- and environmental-related services. After its initial reconnaissance survey, the subcommittee studied in most detail flood control, geographic information systems, household hazardous waste collection, illegal dumping, mosquito/vector control, road and street maintenance and operations, and traffic signal operation and maintenance.

GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS

Existing Service Structure

A GIS is a class of software that stores, manages and analyzes mappable features on, above or below the earth's surface. It links data to geographic locations or areas so as to allow data management, queries and mapping that are not otherwise possible in a standard database or with maps alone.

The City of San Antonio utilizes standardized software and has created standards to create, edit and maintain 240 GIS data layers. It is the primary repository of addressing information, high quality aerial photography and remote sensing imagery for environmental disaster events. Internet map services are available for internal and external customers. An imager web server provides aerial photography and remote sensing data via the internet.

Seven administrative FTE positions are housed in the Information Technology Services Department. All supporting data and mapping positions are housed in 10 respective departments. The City also shares data with Bexar Metro 911, VIA Metropolitan Transit, the Bexar Appraisal District, SAWS, CPS, UTSA and UTHSC and several school districts.

Bexar County does not currently participate in the GIS program. However, it has established an internal steering committee chaired by the County Engineer and including representatives of the Emergency Operations section, the Housing and Human Services Department, the Sheriff's Department, the Voter Registration Section and the Information Services Department. The committee's purpose is to conduct a comprehensive review of existing and planned management systems, and to identify job functions and responsibilities that could be made more effective or efficient through GIS technology. The steering committee will issue a needs assessment to be conducted by a consultant to answer these concerns and to develop an implementation schedule. It is anticipated that this study will be completed by mid-June, pending approval of the contract by the Commissioners Court.

Recommendation

Once the County Needs Assessment is complete, Bexar County should enter into an interlocal agreement with the City of San Antonio no later than October 1, 2004 to allow for information

development and exchange. This interlocal agreement should be modeled after the Radio System, with a Joint Operating Committee or some similar successful structure.

Rationale

Currently the City's GIS layers are complete within the city limits and the Extra-Territorial Jurisdiction. By combining data and mapping from the County providers, information will be complete for this area prepared with the same standards and opportunities for exchange of information. The costs saved will be determined by the amount of data made available to the County by the City, in order to insure that nothing is duplicated. In addition, the City already acquires data from other agencies and formats it in a manner that would be useful to County departments. This is a savings for the County, rather than acquiring the same data from outside agencies and formatting it themselves.

Special Considerations

Funds must be allocated to insure that infrastructure and hardware needs are met to provide for optimum transfer of information to all users as well as for staff to start up the program. A commitment by the County to provide permanent funding to maintain the level of excellence necessary for upkeep of the system is imperative. This must be an on going effort to be successful.

The interlocal agreement should establish the procedures and timing for data availability for use by the County. It should cover use of servers, data storage and aerial storage. It should also confirm how the data will be delivered to the users by fiber optic or other means.

In addition there will be application development needs specific to Bexar County to connect into existing county data that is not available through the City. It will be necessary to fund these applications to make the other available data useful and useable by even the novice user. Properly designed, many users may not even know they are using a GIS application.

Bexar County Information Services will provide for payment for access of the fiber optic cable lines to all participating departments. The GIS administrative staff should be funded through general fund revenues deposited into a separate GIS fund so GIS costs can be tracked and monitored. The actual level of administrative staff required will depend on the level of service provided by the City and the number of departments utilizing GIS which do not have sufficient needs to warrant a full time person in their department. The individual departments will be responsible for funding staff to develop the required data layers that are specific to that department and for which the department commits to all other departments to maintain to an agreed upon degree of accuracy and specified intervals. Departmental staff will also be needed to provide the technical expertise necessary to query the data bases, acquire data sources for specific projects and develop the reports and mapping needed to support the work of the department.

The County should insure full funding of the program in FY 2005. Estimated start up cost is \$2.5 - \$5 million depending on the level of city support for file accessibility. Recurring annual costs will be determined by the internal steering committee.

Legislation

None required.

Implementation Timeline

Development of the required interlocal agreement is already included in the FY 2004 work program of the Plan for City-County Cooperation.

HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE COLLECTION

Existing Service Structure

Bexar County provides no solid waste or recycling services in the unincorporated areas, although various incorporated entities have their own arrangements. Residents in the unincorporated areas make their own arrangements for waste disposal. Except for some businesses or large farming operations, which may have separate arrangements to dispose of hazardous waste, all other residential waste (including recyclables and household hazardous waste) is mixed and disposed of together. The County has about 20 community clean-ups per year at various locations identified by County Commissioners. During these clean-ups, people can drop off their waste at designated locations. It is picked up by the County and disposed of properly.

San Antonio's Household Hazardous Waste program recently transitioned from holding quarterly events around the city to the operation of a permanent household hazardous waste drop-off center at 7030 Culebra. The drop-off center is open Thursdays, Fridays, and the first Saturday of each month and is free to San Antonio residents showing copies of a recent City Public Service bill as proof of residency.

Recommendation

The County and City should develop an agreement which would enable County residents to utilize the City's household hazardous waste drop-off center with minimal or no additional direct cost to them.

Special Considerations

Equitable financing of this extension of city services to outside-city residents must be considered carefully in order to insure that city taxpayers are not asked to subsidize suburban services.

Legislation

None required.

Implementation

Negotiation and adoption of this agreement should be included in the 2005 work program of the Plan for City-County Cooperation. Implementation should be completed by the beginning of FY 2006.

ILLEGAL DUMPING

Existing Service Structure

Bexar County is limited in legal authority, staff and funding to combat illegal dumping in unincorporated areas. The County's three main goals are to abate junk vehicles, to prevent and abate nuisances within platted subdivisions, and to abate nuisances within 50 feet of a public right-of-way. Other complaints consist of weeds, trash and septic tank leaks on private property. The process to abate such complaints is cumbersome. The County must give notice to the owner of the property to remove the nuisance within 30 days. If the nuisance is not abated, the County may then file a complaint with the Justice of the Peace Court. The time period for a hearing is usually 6-8 months. After the hearing the County may then abate the nuisance and bill the owner.

The City of San Antonio's Code Compliance Department is provided with more manpower and capital. The city receives notice of illegal dumping both through the 311 system and through citizens calling the Code Compliance Department directly. Code Compliance Officers will send a Notice of Violation with an affidavit to support prosecution of the violator in Municipal Court if the violation is not abated.

Recommendation

To avoid duplication of specialized equipment, Bexar County should contract with the City of San Antonio for the use of City crews and equipment to clean-up adjudicated nuisances in the unincorporated area. In the meantime, it should also seek greater legal authority and flexibility in combating illegal dumping as part of its 2005 legislative agenda.

Special Considerations

The County's authority to adopt regulations on illegal dumping is limited by Section 365.017 of the Health and Safety Code.

Equitable financing of this extension of city services to outside-city residents must be considered carefully in order to insure that city taxpayers are not asked to subsidize suburban services.

Legislation

The committee recommendation for an interlocal agreement can be implemented without new legislation. However, legislation is required to address the limitations of County's legal authority.

Implementation Timeline

An appropriate interlocal agreement should be developed in the 2005 work program of the Plan for City-County Cooperation.

STREETS AND ROADS MAINTENANCE

Existing Service Structure

Bexar County's capital improvement street/road reconstruction is done entirely by construction contractors due to limited county equipment and manpower. This also includes engineering services. Street/road resurfacing and rehabilitation (crack sealing, chip seal coat and pothole patching) projects are done by county crews. Bridge and guardrail maintenance are also accomplished as in-house projects. Sidewalk maintenance is done in-house except as part of capital improvement street/road reconstruction. The county maintains a small material yard at each of its public works service centers.

Two-thirds of City street resurfacing and rehabilitation is done as in-house projects by city crews. This percentage will increase for 2004. The City has the equipment and manpower to complete the projects more economically than by outside contracting. The City has 14 specially equipped trucks for pothole repair and small projects. Bridge and guardrail maintenance is also done by city crews. Sidewalk maintenance is done only on city property. Reconstruction, new sidewalks and curbs are contracted. The City maintains an ample material yard at each of its public works service centers. The City Purchasing Department obtains bids from paving material companies and signs a one year contract for the best bid. City trucks pick up materials at the factory for each job or the material is delivered to the material yards as needed.

The City and the County use largely identical materials for all of these functions. However, it appears that the County continues to solicit bids for the materials used by County crews separately, rather than "riding" the City's contracts.

Recommendation

The County should eliminate useless effort by using the City's bids for paving and street/road repair materials as much as possible.

Legislation

None required.

Implementation

This recommendation can be implemented immediately.

TRAFFIC SIGNALS OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE

Existing Service Structure

The County has five traffic lights, five general flashers and fifty-two school flashers in the unincorporated area. All are contracted out for maintenance. Other sign development such as work zones, bike paths, speed limits, pavement markings and decals are created in-house.

The City uses in-house forces to construct, install, operate and repair all electronic signals in the city and to develop other safety signs and markings on all pavement rights-of-way.

Recommendation

The County should explore the potential for economies in these functions by contracting with the City for these services.

Legislation

None required

Implementation

Staff exploration of this issue should begin in FY 2004. If results are positive, negotiation and adoption of this agreement should be included in the 2005 work program of the Plan for City-County Cooperation. Implementation should be completed by the beginning of FY 2006.

FLOOD CONTROL

Existing Service Structure

Bexar County levies a dedicated property tax for flood control. It contracts with the San Antonio River Authority for the design and construction of flood control improvements along the San Antonio River and its tributaries. SARA in turn is the local partner with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for improvements authorized by the U.S. Congress.

The City of San Antonio, along with other municipalities in Bexar County, is responsible for local drainage improvements. These are typically funded by city general obligation bond issues and implemented through the city public works department.

After the disaster of the October 1998 floods, the City and County created a Countywide Citizens Watershed Master Plan Committee which recommended consideration of “a single entity, system or structure” to consolidate all flood control and drainage improvements in the community. A follow-up Implementation Committee resulted in an interlocal agreement creating the “Committee of Six” (now being expanded to a Committee of Seven) to coordinate city, county and SARA projects through a structure resembling the Metropolitan Planning Organization for transportation improvements.

Recommendation

A third iteration of the Countywide Citizens’ Watershed Committee, with as many of the original members as possible, should be established in FY 2008 to review the effectiveness of the existing interlocal agreement after its first few years of functioning. Their report should recommend needed revisions to the agreement or the establishment of a separate entity.

Special Considerations

Initial coordination efforts have concentrated on the issue of flood control. However, the interlocal agreement states that this partnership is also to cover the issues of water quality and stormwater management. The San Antonio Water System is a partner with the City regarding water quality and stormwater issues, but SAWS is not mentioned in the interlocal agreement. An addendum should be added to the agreement to spell out the relationship and activities of SAWS in the context of the larger issue.

Legislation

None required.

Implementation

October 2007 – September 2008.

PLANNING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

Areas Studied

This subcommittee reviewed planning, housing, CDBG administration, economic development and other development related services.

DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Existing Service Structure

The regulation of development by the City is overseen by the Development Services Department. All related departments are housed in the Development and Business Services “One-Stop” Center. Primary functions include plan and plat review both inside the City limits and in the City’s extraterritorial jurisdiction, construction permitting and some inspections.

The Bexar County Commissioners Court approves all plats outside incorporated cities in addition to City approval in the ETJ through its Planning Commission. The County Infrastructure Services Department also inspects public infrastructure improvements being installed by developers in new subdivisions.

House Bill 1445 (2001) required the City and County to adopt an interlocal agreement to eliminate the obvious duplication in the review of subdivision plats. However, the current joint submittal and approval process still results in a duplication of most reviews by the City and County. In a true “one stop” at the Development Services Center, county reviewers should office at the Development and Business Services Center and review subdivision plats side-by-side. The existing agreement also does not address duplication – and conflicting standards – in post-platting inspection issues.

Recommendation

The County should be a “reviewing agency” for plat review, thereby falling under the City’s Unified Development Code time limits for review. The Commissioners Court should “approve” plats during that review period. Current proposals allow for separate County approval on all plats containing variances to the UDC. This creates a dual approval process that could result in conflicting decisions by the City and County. With prior approval during the review, the final approval of **all** plats within the ETJ would remain with the City’s Planning Commission. Additionally, a joint plat application and fee process should be established with consistent fees being jointly established. Additionally, the County should adopt the subdivision regulations of the UDC to ensure consistent code enforcement throughout the ETJ and the unincorporated area.

Special Considerations

There is no apparent justification for the County to apply different subdivision standards in the unincorporated area inside and outside the City’s ETJ. However, the subdivision standards of the city’s Unified Development Code may not be totally appropriate in rural areas outside the City’s ETJ. Development of appropriate amendments to coordinate the UDC and the county’s

subdivision standards into a single truly “unified” development code for Bexar County may be a complex and time-consuming process.

Legislation

If the City and County cannot agree on expanding the terms of the interlocal agreement under HB 1445, legislation should be considered which would require a joint process for the *entire* development process rather than limiting the integration to the platting process.

Implementation

- Reviewers from the County should immediately transfer to available space at the “One Stop Center.”
- City and County staff should negotiate the conflicts in inspection standards and make any necessary adjustments before the end of FY 2004.
- Development of a truly “unified” development code for subdivisions outside the city limits – both inside and outside the city’s ETJ – should be a major component of the work program for the Plan for City-County Cooperation. Appropriate amendments to city and county standards should be adopted by the end of calendar 2004.

HOUSING AUTHORITIES

Existing Service Structure

The San Antonio Housing Authority (SAHA) is an independent special unit of government created as a municipal not-for-profit corporation established in 1937. SAHA was created to operate within the boundaries of the City of San Antonio. It has no taxing authority and it is governed by an 11 member board of commissioners appointed by the City Council. SAHA's mission to create affordable housing is divided into three categories: public housing, Section 8 (private sector leased housing) and the non-profit sector. SAHA has 600 employees and a \$120 million budget. The average housing project receives 90% federal assistance and SAHA raises the remaining 10% through rents, other funding opportunities and partnerships with other agencies.

The Housing Authority of Bexar County (HABC) was created in 1975 by the Bexar County Commissioners Court. Five commissioners are appointed by the County Commissioners to the HABC to oversee policies and procedures administered by the authority. HABC's primary function (99%) is the Section 8 housing program, in which it administers 1811 Section 8 vouchers. HABC responsibilities also include 30 HUD-subsidized homes being purchased, Bexar Springs, a 240-unit affordable housing complex, and a 75-unit migrant farm worker duplex. HABC currently has approximately 22 employees and a \$10.1million budget.

In 1996, HABC contracted with SAHA for administration of HABC's Section 8 program. This agreement lasted approximately three years and resulted in administrative cost savings to HABC. However, the agreement was discontinued upon the expiration of its initial term.

Recently both agencies have come under public scrutiny and they are in the process of restructuring their executive leadership.

Recommendations

1. The San Antonio Housing Authority and the Housing Authority of Bexar County should be consolidated into a single city-county housing authority. They perform identical functions through duplicate administrative structures.
2. Pending this structural reorganization, HABC should contract with SAHA for administration of all its programs.

Legislation

Contracting for administrative services can be accomplished under existing law.

Formal structural consolidation may require amendments to state law as well as approval by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Implementation

The respective boards should instruct their staffs to negotiate the required interlocal agreement to contract for services before the end of calendar 2004.

Required legislative changes should be researched and developed by the end of calendar 2004.

THE FUTURE OF CITY-COUNTY SERVICE INTEGRATION

Roadblocks to Integration

During the evaluation process, Commission members recognized three overriding themes that are formidable roadblocks to City/County service integration: differences in the internal cultures of the city and county governments, incompatible technology infrastructure and software, and uncoordinated purchasing practices.

The first major roadblock to any integration is overcoming the complexity of the two, completely separate forms of government. The City of San Antonio has a “home rule” charter which allows for flexibility in how the City’s 11 elected officials govern. The County’s structure of government, as designed in the 1800’s, is a very rigid structure that allows for very few opportunities to integrate services. In addition, the County has twenty-six autonomous elected officials. The Commission recognizes that the different governmental structures have generated internal cultures that are very different and have historically made service integration very difficult. However, the Commission noted that in every meeting both City and County employees were amenable to working together for the betterment of our community – a very positive sign for the future of San Antonio and Bexar County.

Two other potential roadblocks to service integration include differences in technology and technology purchasing practices. For example, both the City and the County operate on different Criminal Justice Information Systems. When the City and County integrated magistration services, the County was required to spend more than \$7,000 to upgrade technology capabilities to effectively communicate with the City. Although each entity has limited access to the other’s system, the Commission believes that a fully integrated justice system would be necessary to integrate City/County public safety services and that this is an option that should be explored. This cost could be significantly greater with additional, future integration.

Recommendation

The City and County should establish a permanent City/County Service Integration Commission to monitor current integration projects and to facilitate future integration projects. One of the Commission’s charges should be to develop a strategy for integrating City/County technology and purchasing systems and practices.